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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2007

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SUBJECT: MFA VIEW ON FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF
RUGGIERO'S DEPARTURE AND THE GOI'S ROLE IN EU REFORM AND
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THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

REF: A) ROME 81 B) 2001 ROME 6573

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM WILLIAM POPE. REASON: 1.5 (B)(D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: THE MFA'S DIRECTOR FOR EU INSTITUTIONAL AND JUDICIAL AFFAIRS, GIUSEPPE BUCCINO, REITERATED TO POLOFF THAT THERE WILL BE NO/NO MAJOR CHANGES IN ITALY'S EUROPEAN POLICY. PM BERLUSCONI SEES NO CONTRADICTION IN PROTECTING AND ADVANCING BOTH NATIONAL AND COMMON EUROPEAN INTERESTS. THE GOI IS DEVOTING CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT, AT THE VERY HIGHEST LEVELS, TO SECURING ITS PLACE IN EUROPE. STILL, BUCCINO SHARED THE VIEW OF MANY INSIDE THE MFA THAT FORMER FM RUGGIERO'S RESIGNATION REPRESENTED A "WASTED CHANCE" FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS OF ITALY IN EUROPE. PM BERLUSCONI'S DECISION TO TAKE THE HELM OF THE MFA ON AN INTERIM BASIS ALLOWS A COOLING OFF PERIOD, AND MEANS RUGGIERO'S SUCCESSOR WOULD MEET LESS RESISTANCE FROM WITHIN THE MFA FOR THE PLAN TO FOCUS RESOURCES ON COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES.

12. (C) PM BERLUSCONI HAS SAID THAT A WELL-CRAFTED EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION IS NECESSARY TO THE FUTURE OF A VIBRANT EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. THE GOI WANTS A CONSTITUTION THAT INCLUDES A CHARTER OF RIGHTS, AND MORE CLEARLY DEFINES THE ROLES AND COMPETENCIES OF COMPONENT INSTITUTIONS. THE CONVENTION WILL ALSO HAVE TO DEAL CAREFULLY WITH THE CONCEPT OF SUBSIDIARITY, AND THE GOI WILL SUPPORT GIVING AN ENHANCED ROLE TO NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN BRUSSELS. THE ITALIAN DELEGATION TO THE CONVENTION WILL CONSIST OF ONE DELEGATE OF GOVERNMENT (ACCORDING TO BUCCINO, THIS MAY BE AN
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ACADEMIC), PLUS TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM PARLIAMENT, ONE FROM THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, ONE FROM THE SENATE. ITALY WOULD PREFER THAT THE SUBSEQUENT INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE (IGC) FINISH ITS WORK BY THE END OF 2003. END SUMMARY.

13. (C) ON JANUARY 15, THE MFA'S DIRECTOR FOR EU INSTITUTIONAL AND JUDICIAL AFFAIRS, GIUSEPPE BUCCINO, REITERATED TO POLOFF THE VIEW INSIDE THE MFA (REPORTED REF B) THAT FORMER FM RUGGIERO'S RESIGNATION REPRESENTED A "WASTED CHANCE" FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS OF ITALY IN EUROPE AND THE MFA WITHIN THE GOI. BUCCINO CONFIDED THAT HE WAS A GREAT SUPPORTER OF RUGGIERO'S, AND LOOKED TO HIM AS SOMETHING OF A ROLE MODEL. RUGGIERO HAD A LONG CAREER IN DIPLOMACY, A STERLING REPUTATION AMONG OTHER EURO-DIPLOMATS, AND WAS A FELLOW NEAPOLITAN TO BOOT. BUT BUCCINO HAD OBSERVED THE PUBLIC ARGUMENT BETWEEN ECONOMIC MINISTER TREMONTI AND RUGGIERO DURING THE LAEKEN EU SUMMIT, WHICH OCCURRED IN FRONT OF PM BERLUSCONI. BUCCINO COULD SENSE FROM THE LOOK ON BERLUSCONI'S FACE THAT HIS HERO'S DAYS IN GOVERNMENT WERE NUMBERED. (COMMENT: AS REPORTED REF B, CHEERLEADERS FOR RUGGIERO SUCH AS BUCCINO WERE CLEARLY IN THE MINORITY AT THE MFA. GIVEN RUGGIERO'S STRENGTH OF CHARACTER AND SELF ESTEEM, PERHAPS HE COULD NOT HAVE SUBMERSED HIMSELF ENOUGH FOR LONG ON ANY TEAM; WITNESS HIS SIX WEEKS AS CEO AT ENI. END COMMENT.)

14. (C) ACCORDING TO BUCCINO, BERLUSCONI'S DECISION TO TAKE THE HELM OF THE MFA ON AN INTERIM BASIS WAS CORRECT. IT ALLOWS A COOLING OFF PERIOD FOR EMOTIONS TO CALM AFTER RUGGIERO'S DEPARTURE. BUCCINO ALSO APPROVES OF BERLUSCONI'S PLAN TO HAVE EMBASSIES AND AMBASSADORS FOCUS MORE ENERGY ON
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PROMOTING ITALIAN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WORLDWIDE, BUT THAT OPINION WAS NOT SHARED BY MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES. HE SURMISED THAT RUGGIERO'S SUCCESSOR WOULD MEET LESS RESISTANCE FROM WITHIN THE MFA IF THE PLAN WERE SEEN AS A CONTINUATION OF BERLUSCONI'S POLICY RATHER THAN AS A NEW INITIATIVE OF HIS/HER OWN. (NOTE: THERE IS CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL GOI DEBATE, DESPITE THE REBUTTAL OF MINISTER OF PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES ANTONIO MARZANO, OVER MOVING ICE (ISTITUTO COMMERCIO ESTERO, EQUIVALENT TO OUR FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE) TO THE MFA. GIVEN MARZANO'S OWN FIRM ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT IN HIS AREA OF EXPERTISE, WE ANTICIPATE THIS MOVE IS UNLIKELY. END NOTE.)

15. (C) TURNING TO THE FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF RUGGIERO'S DEPARTURE, BUCCINO SAID THAT HE HAD PARTICIPATED PERSONALLY IN A NUMBER OF MEETINGS WITH BERLUSCONI, AND HE ASSURED POLOFF THAT THERE WILL BE NO/NO MAJOR CHANGES IN ITALY'S EUROPEAN POLICY. POLITICIANS, INDUSTRY LEADERS, AND ACADEMICS ALL AGREE THAT ITALIAN FOREIGN POLICY HAS TWO FOCAL POINTS; ITS ROLE IN A STRONG EUROPEAN UNION, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. ANYTHING THAT WOULD DETRACT FROM THAT PREMISE IS INCONCEIVABLE. BERLUSCONI SEES NO CONTRADICTION IN PROTECTING AND ADVANCING BOTH NATIONAL AND COMMON EUROPEAN INTERESTS. THE PRESS AND SOME EUROPEAN

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	DODE-00	DOTF-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	OPR-01
	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
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INFO EU CANDIDATE STATES COLLECTIVE
EU INTEREST COLLECTIVE
EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
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POLITICIANS WERE BUILDING RECENT EVENTS INTO A "FALSE PROBLEM." BUCCINO INSISTED THAT THE GOI'S VIEW HAS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, THAT WHAT "BUILDS UP EUROPE, BUILDS UP ITALY."

16. (C) BUCCINO NOTED THAT 2002 WILL BE A CRITICAL YEAR IN THE HISTORY OF THE EU, AND WILL SET THE COURSE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE INSTITUTION. THIS YEAR'S CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION WILL REQUIRE "REASONING, DEBATE, AND DEEPER KNOWLEDGE" OF THE ISSUES AMONG MEMBER STATES, BUT THE FINAL OUTCOME WILL BE A STRONGER, MORE DEMOCRATIC EU. THE CONVENTION PROCESS ITSELF REPRESENTS A MORE TRANSPARENT, DEMOCRATIC APPROACH THAN HAS BEEN USED IN THE PAST FOR DRAFTING EU TREATIES. PM BERLUSCONI HAS SAID ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, PUBLICLY AND IN CLOSED MEETINGS, THAT A WELL CRAFTED EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION WOULD BE NECESSARY TO THE FUTURE OF A VIBRANT EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. CONVENTION MEMBERS MUST AVOID CREATING A DOCUMENT THAT CONFUSES THE AVERAGE EUROPEAN.

17. (C) BUCCINO SAID THAT THE GOI WANTS A CONSTITUTION THAT INCLUDES A CHARTER OF RIGHTS, AND MORE CLEARLY DEFINES THE ROLES AND COMPETENCIES OF COMPONENT INSTITUTIONS. BUT FLEXIBILITY WAS ALSO ESSENTIAL. ITALY DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE A COMPLETE "CATALOG" DELINEATING EU/STATE/REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES. CERTAIN ISSUES WILL REQUIRE CREATIVE THINKING ON HOW CENTRAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES CAN WORK TOGETHER.

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18. (C) THE CONVENTION WILL HAVE TO DEAL CAREFULLY WITH THE CONCEPT OF SUBSIDIARITY. FORMER PM GIULIANO AMATO - ONE OF THE VICE PRESIDENTS OF THE CONVENTION - HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT IN SOME AREAS THE EU WILL BE REQUIRED TO DO MUCH MORE - DEFENSE, ENVIRONMENT, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH - BUT THAT IN MORE "TRADITIONAL" MATTERS, LIKE AGRICULTURE AND STRUCTURAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS, THE "FIRST PILLAR" MECHANISMS MAY BE TOO STRONG AND MIGHT HAVE TO BE REINED IN AND MADE TO ABIDE BY MORE DEMOCRATIC RULES.

9. (C) BUCCINO SAID THE GOI WILL SUPPORT AN ENHANCED ROLE FOR NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN BRUSSELS. ONE WAY MAY BE TO ESTABLISH MORE FORMALIZED LINES OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS. THE GOI'S VIEW IS THAT NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS SHOULD ALSO HAVE THE ABILITY TO APPEAL IMMEDIATELY ANY REGULATION BELIEVED TO VIOLATE THE CONCEPT OF SUBSIDIARITY TO THE COURT OF JUSTICE. UNDER CURRENT PROCEDURES, SUCH APPEALS CAN ONLY BE FILED AFTER A REGULATION IS ENFORCED. BUCCINO SAID THAT THE GOI'S SUPPORT FOR MORE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE PROPOSAL BY SOME EP MEMBERS TO ESTABLISH A "SECOND CHAMBER" OF THE EP, WHICH WOULD BE COMPRISED OF MEMBERS OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS. THE GOI'S VIEW IS THAT SUCH A CHAMBER WOULD REDUCE THE LEGITIMACY OF AND "RE-NATIONALIZE" THE EP.

10. (C) IN ADDITION TO AMATO, THE ITALIAN DELEGATION TO THE CONVENTION WILL CONSIST OF ONE DELEGATE OF GOVERNMENT, (ACCORDING TO BUCCINO, THIS MAY BE AN ACADEMIC) PLUS TWO REPRESENTATIVES FROM PARLIAMENT, ONE FROM THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND ONE FROM THE SENATE, AND WILL MOST LIKELY BE ONE
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OPPOSITION PARTY MEMBER AND ONE GOVERNMENT PARTY MEMBER. THE FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE BY THE END OF JANUARY. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED BY DIPLOMATS FROM MEMBER STATES (BUCCINO WILL LIKELY BE ONE OF THE DIPLOMATS).

11. (C) THE CONVENTION WILL WORK FOR ONE YEAR (MARCH 2002-MARCH 2003). SUBSEQUENT FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE CONVENTION'S RECOMMENDATIONS BY AN INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE (IGC) WILL BE SUBJECT TO MEMBER STATES' INTERNAL POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. ACCORDING TO BUCCINO, THE BRITISH WANT A SLOW PROCESS (CONCLUSION OF THE IGC AT THE END OF 2004) SO AS NOT TO HURT CHANCES FOR PASSAGE OF THE EURO REFERENDUM IN THE UK IN 2003. ITALY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE IGC FINISH BY THE END OF 2003, GIVEN THAT EP ELECTIONS AND A DECISION ON ACCESSION OF NEW MEMBERS ARE SCHEDULED FOR 2004. (COMMENT: NOT COINCIDENTALLY, THIS WOULD BE A FEATHER IN ITALY'S CAP FOR ITS OWN PRESIDENCY, WHICH ENDS IN DECEMBER 2003.)

12. (C) COMMENT: THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS GENERAL STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE BERLUSCONI GOVERNMENT DESIGNED TO REASSURE SKEPTICS THAT ITALY REMAINS FIRMLY ANCHORED IN EUROPE. THE DETAIL OF BUCCINO'S READOUT ON THE SPECIFICS OF GOI THINKING ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE STRONGLY REINFORCES

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	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01	OPR-01
	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	R-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1721
INFO EU CANDIDATE STATES COLLECTIVE
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EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
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THOSE STATEMENTS, AS WELL AS OUR CONVICTION THAT ITALY REMAINS STRONGLY COMMITTED TO ITS VIEW OF A STRONGER EUROPEAN UNION. THE GOI IS DEVOTING CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT, AT THE VERY HIGHEST LEVELS, TO SECURING ITS PLACE IN EUROPE. ITALY IS SETTING ITSELF UP TO TAKE AN ACTIVE, LEADING ROLE IN PLOTTING THE COURSE FOR THE EU FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. THESE

ARE NOT THE ACTIONS OF A GOVERNMENT IN RETREAT FROM ITS
NEIGHBORS. END COMMENT.
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